

LINES BY RUCKERT.

(Translated by Baroness SWIFT.)
 If in a human heart wouldst find
 Stir every chord of melody,
 Oh, strike the key-note then of pain!
 But touch not thou the notes of glee.
 Many a one can never know
 How life by gladness may be blest,
 But there is one ne'er felt the throes
 Of some sharp sorrow in his breast!

OUR BLUE BLOOD.

Two centuries and a half ago
 Off trudged to work with shouldered hoe
 A woman, barefoot, browned, and rough,
 With pluck of Puritans stuff,
 Six lustre children tagged behind,
 All hatless, shoeless, unconfined,
 And happy as the birds that flew
 About them. Naught of books they knew,
 Save one they read at twilight hour,
 Brought with them in the stanch "Mayflower."
 A pretty lady, thin and white,
 In a hammock swinging light,
 Languishes, and in the shade
 Devours rhyme and lemonade,
 While bending near her lover sighs,
 And gently fans away the flies,
 She murmurs, "Tis so nice that we
 Are neither of low family,
 But of old Puritan stock
 That landed upon Plymouth."

MISCELLANEOUS READING.

THE Philological Society of England has united with the American Philological Association upon a list of words, which they jointly recommend for adoption. The changes to be made are covered by the following rules:

1. Drop silent e when phonetically useless, as in live, vineyard.
2. Drop a from ea having the sound of e, as in feather. Drop e from ea having the sound of a as in heart.
3. For beauty use the old beauty.
4. Drop o from eo having the sound of e, as in leopard. For yeoman, write yoman.
5. Drop i out of parliament.
6. For o having the sound of u in but, write o; as in above, write abuv. For women, restore wimen.
7. Drop o from ou having the sound of u, as in journal.
8. Drop silent u after g before a, and in native English words, as guard, guess.
9. Drop final ue, as in catalogue, etc.
10. Spell rhyme, rime.
11. Double consonants may be simplified. Final b, d, g, n, r, t, f, l, z, as in ebb, egg, etc., but not in all, hall. Medial before another consonant, as battle. Initial unaccented prefixes and other unaccented syllables, as in abbreviate, etc., traveller, etc.
12. Drop silent b in bomb, crumb, debt, doubt, dumb, lamb, limb, numb, plumb, subtle, succumb, thumb.
13. Change e back to s in cinder, expence, fierce, hence, once, peace, scarce, since, source, thence, tierce, whence.
14. Drop the h of ch in chamoile, choler, cholera, melancholy, school, stomach. Change e to k in ache, anchor.
15. Change d and ed final to t when so pronounced, as in crossed, looked, etc., unless the e affects the preceding sound, as in chafed, chanced.
16. Drop g in feign, foreign, sovereign.
17. Drop h in aghast, burgh, ghastr. Drop gh in haughty, though (tho), through (throu). Change gh to f where it has that sound, as in cough, laughter.
18. Drop l in could.
19. Drop p in receipt.
20. Drop s in aisle, demense, island. Change s to z in distinctive words, as in abuse (verb), house (verb), rise (verb).
21. Drop e in seent, scythe (sithe).

A COMMON MERIDIAN.

We reprint from the *Glasgow Herald* the following article on the subject of a common meridian, a matter of special interest to mariners all over the world.

"The main work of the Geodetic Congress in Rome, where its meetings were held last year, has been to decide on the highly important practical subject of the choice of a common meridian for the whole civilised world, and that of Greenwich has been unanimously adopted. Great inconvenience is experienced, not only by scientific men, but also by navigators and students of geography, from the confusion which arises from the use by each country of its own meridian. No French or Italian map can be used by an Englishman without adding or subtracting the number of degrees of longitude which represent the difference between the meridians of Paris or Rome and that of Greenwich, and vice versa. Thus the productions in that branch of practical science have been rendered, if not useless, at least so cumbersome in actual service as greatly to detract from their value. In all scientific works on geographical subjects the want of a common meridian has made itself felt on account of the elaborate arithmetical calculations which have to be made in order to reduce the meridian of one country to that of another. But it is in the adoption of an universal hour which would result from a common meridian that, perhaps, the chief practical benefit of the latter would be found. At present each country adopts as its legal or fully recognised hour that of its own special meridian. This is, of course, inaccurate for every spot except the spot from which the meridian is calculated. At the same time, little or no practical inconvenience is felt from such a fact as that the inhabitants of a place like Shrewsbury put their clocks on five or six minutes in order to make their time identical with that of London or Greenwich. In passing, however, from England to France and from France to Italy the difference of some nine minutes in the one case and forty-seven in the other is a serious inconvenience. The confusion created in time-tables and in the details of railway journeys is an evil of by no means small dimensions. The apparent vagaries of the electric telegraph are often commented upon. A despatch is received in New York five hours before it is sent off. In the opposite direction, although the time required for the passage of the electric current from London to Melbourne is practically nil, a message is not, apparently, received in the last-named place until many hours after its despatch. As the means of communication throughout the world become developed, there can be no doubt that the inconveniences arising from the want of a common meridian would be constantly more appreciably felt; nor can it be said that the action of the Geodetic Society has been taken at all too soon. Of course, it cannot be expected that the whole world will adopt in the practice of common life the meridian of Greenwich as far as time is concerned. The men of Philadelphia or Boston will hardly choose to call it mid-day at their seven o'clock in the morning. There will be a scientific hour side by side with a practical one everywhere, and the countries nearest to the common meridian may be expected to allow the one to merge into the other. The date of the month, however, will everywhere follow the common meridian, and at its exact antipodes the date of the day which is in full progress at the spot of the common meridian will commence at midnight.

That Greenwich should have been selected as the new common meridian for the whole civilised world was not quite a foregone conclusion. The French members of the Congress did their best both in public and in private to prevent the selection of an English centre in preference to Paris. What, however, weighed with the Congress probably more than any other consideration was the fact that it would have been impossible for England to accept any other spot than Greenwich. The interests of Great Britain are far greater in this matter than those of any other country. The English sea charts are both better and more numerous than the similar productions of other lands, and they are, in fact, in almost general

use among continental nations. Thus the question is one rather for foreigners to decide than Englishmen. This is the view which has prevailed at Rome. The decision of the Congress, however, in favor of Greenwich has, of course, no judicial validity whatever. It is simply the expression of a scientific organised opinion on a very important subject. But there can be no doubt that legislation will follow among continental nations, and that in the course of a few years the inconveniences which have so long been endured through the absence of a common meridian will be abolished. England can do little or nothing in the matter. It is for the countries which have not hitherto adopted the Greenwich meridian—the United States, Germany, Austria, and Italy use it in navigation—to move in the matter. Part of the scheme of the Geodetic Congress is to urge upon Governments the importance of immediate legislation in the sense of the decision which has been reached. It is to be hoped that as the men of science appear to be agreed political considerations will not be allowed to interfere with the completion of a work which would greatly add to the convenience of a very large number of persons.

THE NEW ATLANTIC CABLES.

John W. Mackay, President of the Commercial Cable Company, has during his brief stay in Europe concluded all the arrangements necessary to make the success of the Mackay-Bennett cable an absolute certainty. The Commercial Cable Company, wishing to be independent of any land lines, which, as the experience of other companies has shown, are subject to constant interruptions, caused by gales and snowstorms, have ordered their cables to be laid double, not only across the Atlantic, but also through the entire distance to their landing points in New York and Massachusetts. One cable, landing at Cape Ann will be able to carry messages direct to Boston and the Eastern States. The other will run up to Fire Island and thence through Great South Bay to Coney Island and right into New York by means of an underground cable. This route has been carefully chosen. With a view to avoiding the danger of possible damage from ships' anchors, both cables will run down the coast from Nova Scotia in a depth of water of not less than 100 fathoms. From the same consideration Fire Island was chosen as the point of destination in preference to Sandy Hook.

Mackay, who is determined that the new cable company shall be a success has looked after every detail, and procured every means which a liberal expenditure can command and the skill of the most experienced electricians can suggest for providing against all eventualities. A satisfactory arrangement has been concluded with Sir Julian Goldschmidt, President of the Submarine Telegraph Company, which possesses a monopoly of the right to lay cables across the channel. The Submarine Telegraph Company, by this arrangement, besides granting the right to the Commercial Company to lay their cable, also undertakes, in case of interruption or accident, to convey all messages directly through their own lines across the channel until the completion of the necessary repairs.

The new submarine cable, instead of stopping at Brest, will run directly into Havre, by which a much more prompt and reliable service will be obtained, as it was found in the case of the other companies that the land lines between Brest and Paris are often interrupted by gales, thus causing a delay of several hours.

George G. Ward, Manager in New York of the Direct Cable Company since it opened, and also Manager of the French Cable Company, has resigned those places to become General Manager of the Bennett and Mackay Cable Company.

A mass meeting was held in London on 16th February, at Princes Hall, Piccadilly, to denounce the Egyptian policy of the Government. The hall was too small to hold the great throngs of people. The meeting was organised, Lord Randolph Churchill made a speech, and Sir Robert Peel offered a resolution, which was carried, to the effect that Parliament had ceased to be in accordance with the people, and ought to be turned out. The meeting ended in great uproar.

OPENING OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT—THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

At the opening of the British Parliament on 8th February, the Queen delivered her speech through a royal commission. She announced continued friendly relations with all foreign powers. A Commission is now at work settling the Newfoundland fishery question; diplomatic relations with Mexico are soon to be resumed. Commercial treaties are now being arranged with Turkey, Spain and Japan, and a treaty of commerce has been signed with Corea. The progress of affairs in Egypt was reviewed. Measures have been taken for the prevention of oppression in the Transvaal Republic. Direct imperial authority has been resumed in Basutoland. In regard to finances, Her Majesty stated that she expected the revenue for the current year would fall short of estimates. She announced that the condition of Ireland was substantially improved. An enlargement of the elective franchise throughout the kingdom is contemplated. Local government at some points is to be reformed. This latter subject will include the regulation of the liquor traffic. It was thought that a franchise extension would be beneficial and result in a closer attachment of the nation to the throne. Many other reforms are contemplated: the formation of a railway commission, the security of life and property at sea, the repression of corrupt practices at elections, the better administration of Scottish business, the closing of public houses on Sunday in Ireland, and the improvement of intermediate education in Wales.

Subsequent to the reading of the address, a warm discussion ensued in each House over the reply to the "Speech from the Throne." An amendment to the motion emanating from the Liberal side, offered by Lord Randolph Churchill in the Commons, and by Earl Salisbury in Lords, was defeated by an overwhelming vote without division. The Parnellites refrained from voting.

THE STORY-TELLER.

LITTLE WHITE SOULS.

By Florence Marryat.

AUTHOR OF "FIGHTING THE AIR," "LOVE'S CONFLICT," ETC., ETC.

(Continued.)

Meanwhile some mysterious circumstances occur for which Mrs. Dunstan cannot account. One day as she is sitting at her solitary dinner, with two natives standing behind her chair, she is startled by hearing a sudden rushing wind, and looking up, sees the eight doors in the gallery open and slam again, apparently of their own accord, whilst simultaneously the eight doors on the ground floor which were standing open shut with a loud noise. Ethel looks round; the two natives are green with fright; but she believes that it is only the wind, though the evening is as calm as can be. She orders them to open the lower doors again, and having done so, they have hardly returned to their station behind her chair before the sixteen doors open and shut as before. Mrs. Dunstan is now very angry; she believes the servants are playing tricks upon her, and she is not the woman to permit such an impertinence with impunity. She rises from the table majestically and leaves the room, but reflection shows her that the only thing she can do is to write to her husband on the subject, for she is in the power of her servants so long as she remains at the castle, where they cannot be replaced.

She stays in the garden that evening, thinking over the occurrence and its remedy, till long after her child has been put to bed; and as she re-enters the castle she visits Katie's room before she retires to

her own, and detects the Dye in the act of hanging up a large black shawl across the window that looks out upon the terrace.

"What are you doing that for?" cries Ethel impetuously, her suspicions ready to be aroused by anything, however trivial. The woman stammers and stutters, and finally declares she cannot sleep without a screen drawn before the window.

"Bad people's coming and going at night here," she says in explanation, "and looking in at the window upon the child; and if they touch missy she will die. Missus had better let me put up the curtain to keep them out. They can't do me any harm. It is the child they come for."

"Bad people coming at night! What on earth do you mean, Dye? What people come here but our own servants? If you go on talking such nonsense to me I shall begin to think you drink too much arrack."

"Missus, please!" replies the native with a deprecatory shrug of the shoulders, "but Dye speaks the truth! A white woman walks on this terrace every night, looking for her child, and if she sees little Missy, she will take her away and then you will blame poor Dye for losing her. Better let me put up the curtain, so that she can't look in at the window!"

Ethel calls the woman some opprobrious epithet, but walks away nevertheless, and lets her do as she will; only the next day she writes a full account to Charlie of what she has gone through, and tells him she thinks all the people are going mad, in which opinion he entirely agrees with her.

For 'mad' read 'bad' he writes back again, "and I'm with you. There is no doubt upon the matter, my dear girl. The brutes don't like the cold and are playing tricks upon you to try and force you to return to the plains. It is a common thing in this country. Don't give away to them, but tell them I'll stop their pay all round if anything unpleasant happens again. I think you must now confess it would have been better to take my advice and try a trip home instead. However, as you are at Mandanati, don't come back until your object in going there is accomplished. I wish I could join you, but it is impossible just yet. Jack Lawless is obliged to go north on business, and I have promised to accompany him. Keep up a good heart, dearest, and don't let those brutes think they have any power over you."

"Going north on business," exclaims Ethel bitterly, "and she is going too, I suppose, and Charlie can find time to go with them, though he cannot come to me. Oh, it is too hard! It is more than any woman can be expected to bear! I'm sure I wish I had gone to England instead. Then I should at least have had my dear sister to tell my troubles to, and he—he would have been free to flirt with that wretched woman as much as ever he chose." And the poor wife lies in her bed that night too unhappy to sleep, while she pictures her husband doing all sorts of dishonorable things, instead of snoring as he really is in his own deserted couch. Her room adjoins that in which the Dye is sleeping with her little girl, and the door between them is standing wide open. From where she lies, Ethel can see part of the floor of Katie's bedroom, from which the moonlight is excluded in consequence of the great black shawl which the nurse continues to pin nightly across the window-pane. Suddenly, as she watches the shaded floor,